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VENEZUELA: AUTHOR COMMENTS ON COUP ATTEMPT (TAKE 1 OF 2)
PA0602012192 SANTA FE DE BOGOTA ENISORAS CARACOL NETWORK IN SPANISH 1200 GMT 5 FEB 92
[TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH VENEZUELAN AUTHOR DR. ARTURO USLAR PIETRI BY UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER; PLACE NOT GIVEN -- LIVE]

[1m<TEXT>
[TEXT] [REPORTER] GREETINGS, DR. USLAR PIETRI.
[USLAR] IT IS MY PLEASURE.
[REPORTER] WE WOULD LIKE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE 4 FEBRUARY FAILED COUP ATTEMPT IN YOUR COUNTRY. WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN THE UNDERLYING CAUSES THAT MAY HAVE TRIGGERED THE COUP?
[USLAR] I BELIEVE IT IS A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO THINK THAT WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED IN VENEZUELA IS A MILITARY PROBLEM. WE HAVE HAD A REGRETTABLE, PAINFUL, AND SAD EPISODE -- AN UPRISING, WHICH CAUSED DEATH AND DAMAGE AND WHICH IS NOW UNDER CONTROL AND HAPPILY OVER. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO THINK THAT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN ONE OF A MILITARY UPRISING. THE UPRISING, WHICH HAPPILY FAILED, HAS TAKEN PLACE WITHIN A FRAMEWORK -- AND THIS IS WHERE WE NEED TO LOOK FOR THE CONDITIONS THAT CAUSED IT, BECAUSE THESE CONDITIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED. THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY IS VERY BAD. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE AND MEDIA IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOT AWARE OF THE REAL ISSUES. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS BAD, COLLECTIVE POVERTY HAS INCREASED ENORMOUSLY, PUBLIC SPENDING GOES TO PAY THE DEBT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF SOME GIGANTIC UNPRODUCTIVE ENTERPRISES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT FOUNDED AND WHICH EAT AWAY HALF OR THREE-FOURTHS OF THE PUBLIC RESOURCES. NOTHING EFFECTIVE HAS BEEN DONE TO FIGHT CORRUPTION. THERE IS A LOT OF CORRUPTION TOLERATED IN VENEZUELA. EVERYDAY A NEW SCANDAL EMERGES; NEVER HAS ONE OF THESE SCANDALS ENDED WITH ANYONE IMPORTANT BEING CONVICTED, SENTENCED, OR IMPRISONED. THE IMPRESSION PEOPLE HAVE IS THAT THERE IS A COMRADESHIP THAT COVERS UP EVERYTHING. FOR A LONG TIME THERE HAS BEEN A CLAMOR TO CLEAN UP THE JUDICIAL BRANCH QUICKLY; TO HAVE AN INDEPENDENT AND RESPECTABLE JUDICIAL BRANCH -- SOMETHING THAT WE DO NOT HAVE, BECAUSE THE JUDICIAL BRANCH IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN POLITICS.
[REPORTER] DR. USLAR, WHY ALL THIS DISCONTENT, CORRUPTION, AND SKEPTICISM IN THE JUDICIAL BRANCH? DID A MILITARY SECTOR -- THE PARATROOPERS -- CAPITALIZE ON THIS DISCONTENT, AND NOT THE POLITICAL SECTOR AND VENEZUELA'S LEADERSHIP?
[USLAR] I HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT ONE OF THE BAD THINGS ABOUT THE VENEZUELAN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS THAT THERE IS NO OPPOSITION OR ALTERNATIVE. MANY YEARS AGO WE FOUNDED SOMETHING CALLED AN INSTITUTIONAL PACT -- YOU HAD SOMETHING SIMILAR IN COLOMBIA -- WHEREBY A SORT OF AGREEMENT IS REACHED BETWEEN THE RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTIES TO KEEP A SORT OF GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT TO MAINTAIN THE SYSTEM. THE RESULT HAS BEEN THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE ENDED UP BEING PARTNERS; IN OTHER WORDS, RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE PRACTICALLY THE SAME INTERESTS.
WHEN AN ENGLISHMAN VOTES FOR THE LABOR PARTY, HE KNOWS HE IS VOTING FOR A PARTY THAT IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY -- A PARTY WITH OTHER GUIDANCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND WAYS. WHEN AN AMERICAN VOTES FOR THE DEMOCRATS, HE KNOWS HE IS VOTING FOR ATOTALLY DIFFERENT P ARTY -- A PARTY WITH OTHER MOTIVATIONS,

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
DATE/CASE ID: 08 JAN 2007 200503656

CHARACTER, PURPOSES, AND PROGRAMS.

WHEN A VENEZUELAN VOTES FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION OR COPEI [SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY], HE VOTES FOR [WORDS INDISTICT] BECAUSE THE REMAINING PARTIES ARE COMPLETELY INTERMIXED AND THE PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT THERE IS REALLY AN ELECTORAL ALTERNATIVE FOR THIS TO TRULY CHANGE. VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY NEEDS TO BE MORE SINCERE; IT NEEDS TO CLARIFY WHAT MEANS IT HAS AND WHAT ARE ITS [WORDS INDISTINCT] WE NEED A DIFFERENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM, NOT THE SYSTEM FOR ILLITERATES THAT WE HAVE BEEN DRAGGING ALONG FOR 30 YEARS.

IT WOULD THEREFORE BE A SERIOUS MISTAKE TO BELIEVE THAT THIS HAS BEEN A MILITARY EPISODE BROUGHT ABOUT BY SOME AMBITIOUS OFFICERS. OF COURSE, WE CANNOT DENY THERE HAS BEEN A REGRETTABLE UPRISING, BUT THIS IS JUST ONE ASPECT OF THE PROBLEM; IT IS NOT THE PROBLEM ITSELF.

[REPORTER] DR. USLAR, DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN VENEZUELA WILL SOMEHOW AFFECT THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA, AND THAT THIS PROCESS WILL ONCE AGAIN BE PLACED ON HOLD UNTIL PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ IS REPLACED?

[USLAR] I CANNOT MAKE PREDICTIONS. DO YOU WANT ME TO PLAY THE ROLE OF NOSTRADAMUS?

(MORE)

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INR Information Support System (INRISS) Section Summary

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Sections stored at 920206102759

TAKE	CSN	REF	TIME OF RECEIPT	TITLE
01-02	055	055	920206082746	VENEZUELA: AUTHOR COMMENTS ON CO